



INJURY PREVENTION

Quick Review of Safety

Hearing Loss Prevention

NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS

Loud noises can damage structures within the ear, causing permanent damage. Further exposures can cause additional damage, leading to cumulative effects that accelerate natural hearing loss due to aging. There is currently no medical procedure that can fix this damage, and hearing aids do not restore lost hearing. Long-term exposure to loud noises can lead to gradually diminished hearing. Other times this hearing loss can occur quickly from extremely loud events, such as explosions, gunfire or other loud noises near the ear.

PREVENTING NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS

Potentially injurious noises are generally defined as those greater than 85 decibels for a specific amount of time. Consider the following both on and off the job:

- Identify sources of loud noises: snowmobile, lawnmowers, firearms, power tools, etc.

80-90 Decibels	100+ Decibels
Hand Drill	Snow Blower
Push Mower	Leaf Blower
Gas Trimmer	Chain Saw
Air Compressor	Circular Saw
Shop Vac	Car Horn

- Avoid loud sounds whenever possible or minimize your time around them.
- Turn down sound levels when possible.
- Use hearing protection when other measures are unavailable or not feasible to control sound.
- Work with an audiologist or doctor.

(Over)



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WEARING HEARING PROTECTION

When using hearing protection, it is important to follow the directions for use. Improperly worn hearing protection does not offer the indicated levels of protection.

One of the most common types of hearing protection are disposable foam ear plugs. To wear these ear plugs properly, follow the steps below (see pictures at [CDC.gov/niosh/mining/content/earplug.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/content/earplug.html)).

1. Squeeze the foam plug to compress it to make it easier to fit within the ear. As ear canal sizes vary, please select the size of plug that fits best for you.
2. Grab the top curve of the ear with the opposite hand. For example, use the left hand to grab the top right ear.
3. Pull the ear upward to straighten the ear canal.
4. Push the compressed foam plug into the ear and wait for it to expand before removing your finger holding it in. Be sure to do this prior to entering a noisy area or conducting a noisy task.
 - The length of time to hold it in the ear varies by manufacturer, but it is recommended to wait at least 10 seconds to give the plugs a chance to expand.
5. After it expands to fit the ear canal, do the same process with the other ear.
6. When finished with the noisy environment or task, take the ear plugs out and dispose of them. Do not reuse disposable ear plugs

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